

Inspection of Life Wirral (Independent) Sport School

126 Victoria Road, Wallasey, Merseyside CH45 9LD

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students who attend this school have previously experienced considerable periods out of education. They settle well in the safe and nurturing environment that leaders have created. Pupils say that adults understand them and keep them safe. The attendance of pupils significantly improves once they join the school.

As pupils settle into leaders' well-established routines, they learn how to manage their emotions more effectively. They begin to show tolerance, respect and understanding for others. Pupils start to understand how their behaviour can affect those around them. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning improve over time. Any bullying, or unacceptable behaviour, is dealt with appropriately by skilled staff through discussion and resolution.

Leaders and staff are aspirational for all pupils to succeed. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils contribute to their local community, for example, through fundraising events for local charities and working with a local environmental group. Pupils enjoy the broad range of sports education that leaders provide. This helps them to develop their resilience, determination and perseverance.

Pupils and students are supported well to overcome their barriers to learning. They work hard and focus on their learning. This helps them to achieve well from their individual starting points. Pupils thrive academically and socially. Most parents and carers spoke highly of the positive change in their children's behaviour, self-belief and achievements since joining this school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Before joining the school, pupils have had their education severely disrupted. This has led to them missing important knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. Many pupils struggle to manage their emotions and their high levels of anxiety. This often hinders their ability to engage with learning.

Over time, highly skilled staff help pupils to develop effective strategies to be able to manage their own emotions appropriately. Pupils learn to take account of the needs of others, such as their classmates. This improved behaviour means that learning continues without disruption. This helps pupils to focus on their learning and to achieve well. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They work hard and take pride in their achievements.

A range of assessment strategies are used effectively by skilled staff. This helps them to accurately identify what pupils know and can do academically, physically, socially and emotionally. Leaders use this information to design a personalised curriculum which supports pupils' individual special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Across a range of subjects, leaders have identified the key knowledge that they want pupils to know and the order in which it is to be taught. Teachers ensure that pupils have the important knowledge that they need before new learning is introduced. Over time, this helps pupils to build their confidence. They begin to apply their knowledge more confidently to new situations. This helps pupils to make links across subjects when learning something new and their achievement improves.

In most subjects, leaders have ensured that staff have the expertise and subject knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum well. Leaders provide opportunities to enhance the curriculum further with fieldwork in the local area and visits to places of interest. A love of reading is promoted well through the quality texts that pupils study and the wide selection of texts available in the school library. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the plays that they have seen and the books that they have read. However, in a few subjects, staff lack the expertise needed to deliver the curriculum confidently beyond key stage 3.

Pupils' personal, social, health and economic education is promoted well. The curriculum has been carefully designed to provide pupils with the skills and understanding that they need to be positive citizens in modern Britain. Leaders actively promote the importance of tolerance and respect for difference. Pupils are introduced to the world of work and learn about the different options available to them when they leave school. The curriculum is complemented by a programme of assemblies and visitors which promote pupils' personal development well.

The proprietor has a comprehensive understanding of the school. The advisory board ensures that the school's resources, accommodation and premises are maintained to a high standard. Staff feel valued and listened to by leaders. They appreciate the weekly yoga sessions provided to support their well-being. The proprietor has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. The school's website provides parents and carers with the information they might require. This includes a complaints procedure and safeguarding policies. The proprietor ensures that there is a suitable accessibility plan in place to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well and are extremely vigilant. The training that staff receive enables them to act appropriately when looking out for any subtle changes in pupils' behaviour or demeanour which could mean that they are at risk of harm. Staff understand the procedures that they need to follow should they have any concerns about pupils' safety and/or welfare. Leaders engage well with external agencies to ensure the safety of pupils and to make sure that any additional help is provided.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, and how to recognise risks, in a variety of situations. These include when they are out in the local community or when they are using social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a small number of subjects, staff lack the confidence and expertise needed to deliver some aspects of the curriculum to older pupils. Consequently, these subjects are not currently available for all pupils to study beyond key stage 3. Leaders should ensure that staff have the expertise that they need so that pupils can opt to study, and achieve well, in a broader range of subjects.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	148149
DfE registration number	344/6009
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10225760
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Alastair Saverimutto
Headteacher	Sarah Quilty
Annual fees (day pupils)	From £50,000
Telephone number	07818418918
Website	www.lifewirral.com
Email address	als@lifewirral.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the first standard inspection of the school.
- The school caters for pupils who have an education, health and care plan primarily for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorder.
- The route for a place at the school is via a referral from the commissioning local authority.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, the lead inspector spoke with the proprietor. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors also spoke with the headteacher and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics and science. They also reviewed the curriculum for history and geography. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to staff. They also looked at pupils' and students' work and spoke to pupils and students about their learning and their experience of the school.
- Inspectors reviewed all survey responses, including those from pupils and students, staff and parents and carers. This included taking into account the responses to Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with a parent on request.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. They also met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including risk assessments completed for when pupils are off site.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the independent school standards and made a tour of the premises with the proprietor.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mavis Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

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